Old Engineer Who Piloted Train For Lincoln Bier Tells of Life

Letter Addressed to "Oldest Engineer" is Delivered to A. J. Wemple of Forth Worth, Texas; Old Pioneer Started Career in 1851 on Dinky Railroad.

FT. WORTH, Texas, July 23.—Addressed to "The Oldest Engineer in Captivity, Ft. Worth, Texas," a letter received at the postoffice here recently was delivered without hesitation to the person for whom it was intended, A. J. Wemple, of this city. It is probable that no one will dispute the title with him when the statement is made that he had been a full-fledged engineer for 11 years when he piloted Lincoln's funeral train over his run.

It was in February, 1851, that Alonzo John Wemple, then a lad of 17, got his first taste of railroading, hauling iron and ties, getting a berth as fireman in September of the same year. The road, which connected Schenectady and Troy, is now a part of the great New York Central system, along with half a dozen other short lines, the consolidation having been made in 1872.

Railroading in those days was not what it is now. To begin with, the engines were dinky affairs, with one pair of four-and-a-half-foot driving wheels, and burned wood. It is reported that many a mile of good rail fence along right-of-ways of the period disappeared mysteriously, until the farmers learned to watch the trains go through. Wemple has seen wood supplanted and peat, soft coal, blacksmith coal, hard coal and oil burned at different times since, with electricity now looming as their final successor.

Dispatching the Maximum.

But electricity was unheard of in those days, as far as railroading was concerned, and so, of course, were the telephone and telegraph. "Dispatching" was an art unknown, Wemple relates, and trains were run by "time cards." If an engineer was 30 minutes behind schedule he had to stop and let the first approaching train pass him. Sometimes he waited until he saw the smoke of his fellow engineer's engine in the distance and then "scooted" for a siding. It was an exciting life.

Engines were not numbered in those days, but bore names, after the maritime fashion. Wemple's first charge was the "Buffalo." There was nothing sombre about the "iron horse" in those days either. They were enlivened with a profusion of nickel and brass work, all of which was kept burnished until it looked like a piece of jewelry in the sunlight, and it is not unlikely that the captain of the ship felt no more pride in the appearance of his craft than did the old-time engineer in the high-stacked engine over whose throttle he presided.

It was in 1854 that Wemple became an engineer, on his transfer to the Greenville & Miami line, running from Dayton, Ohio, to Union City, Indiana, a distance of 47 miles. Later the road was extended to Indianapolis, making the length of the line 130 miles. He remained there until March, 1855, when he went to the Illinois Central at Centralia, Ill., then a town with about 10 houses, now a city of around 20,000 population.

Remembers Confederate Prisoners.

He was on this line when the Civil war broke out and remembers how his pity was stirred when Confederate soldiers, clad in a few rags, were loaded into boxcars and shipped into the frosty north as prisoners. Closely guarded by Union soldiers in heavy overcoats, their breaths smoking in the crisp atmosphere, they made a picture Wemple could never forget.

In 1863 an offer came to Wemple to return to his old love, the same branch of the New York Central on which he had worked before. It was here that he piloted the funeral train which bore Lincoln's body from Schenectady to Troy—there being no bridge at Albany at that time—on the long run from Washington to Springfield, Ill., where the martyred president's body still rests.

Great solemnity marked the progress of the presidential cortege, Wemple relates. A pilot train ran ahead of the funeral train and cleared the way. Both were heavily draped in mourning and ran at a constant speed of 20 miles an hour. One of the duties of the pilot train was to stop all trains on the parallel track and make them wait until the funeral train had passed.

At each station the bell of the engine tolled in proclamation and at the larger cities the train stopped to let the populace file through for a glimpse of the body as it lay in state, heavily guarded. Both trains carried a crew of workmen and repair materials, so that there might be no delay from breakdowns.

Wemple worked a while for a private company which leased his engine in 1871, coming to Texas in 1886. For two years he had the run between Texarkana and Whitesboro, which was the western limit of the Texas & Pacific railway at that time, and in 1888 he took over a switch engine in the Bonham yards which he operated continuously until January of this year. Rheumatism then intervened and forced him to pay a visit to the home of his son here.

Not Through Railroading.

Wemple insists that he is by no means through railroading and that as soon as he can walk a little better he will return to his throttle. And in the meantime, if there is an engineer still on "active duty" who can boast a longer record than his, Wemple would like to hear from him.

Wemple's second wife, whom he married in 1900, was Miss Pearl Williams, a Ft. Worth girl. She is with him and their son, J. N. Wemple, at this time. She is a great-niece of the late W. B. Tuckers, prominent in the early history of the city.

It is a far cry from the old hand brakes and unstandardized gauge of the roads on which Wemple first worked to the air-controlled monsters of steel that now pull the nation's freight and passenger traffic across the continent, yet Wemple has one regret.

When they chose between the various gauges of track width which then obtained, ranging from three to six feet, the experts decided on a width not much greater than the minimum of that day, he declares. He has recently tried to visualize the present size of rolling stock, in comparison with the Rocky mountain giants of today, had they adopted the six-foot gauge as the standard.

At least it would not be necessary to hook up seven of them to one snowplow, as he saw done in one New York blizzard.

"Lost Dog Slink" May Be Newest Dance Name

PARIS, July 23.—"That lost dog slink" probably will be the title of the next syncopated hit. Irving Berlin, before leaving Paris on his return voyage to the United States, lost a police dog he brought from Germany. The sony writer was much moved—and a jazz tune is expected to result.

Young Girl Cultivates Forty Acres of Ground

PITTSFIELD, Ill., July 23.—Edith Stout, a 14-year-old girl here, has broken 40 acres of ground, using a walking plow and a team of mules. She worked the ground, preparing it for corn, and is now working it for the fourth time.

Edith's field is one of the best-looking in Pike county.

Eiffel Tower to Send Messages to Farmers

PARIS, July 23.—Eiffel Tower, highest building in the world, is to be put to work telling farmers when it is going to rain. Radio messages forecasting the weather are to be broadcasted three times a day. These will be received at local stations, where bells will be rung—three peals for rain, six for frost, ten for a storm.

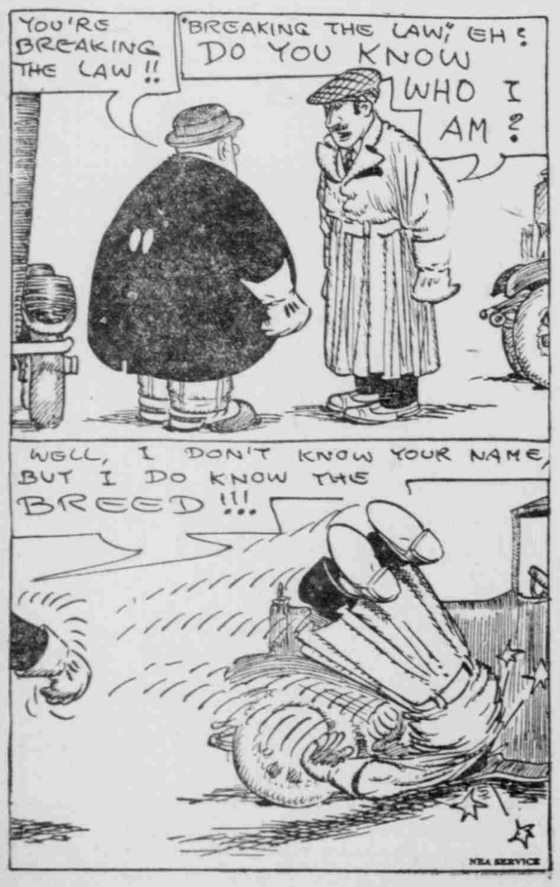
SWISS HAVE 9-HOUR DAY.

GENOA, July 23.—The Swiss National Council has voted to increase the working day from eight to nine hours, according to a Matin dispatch.

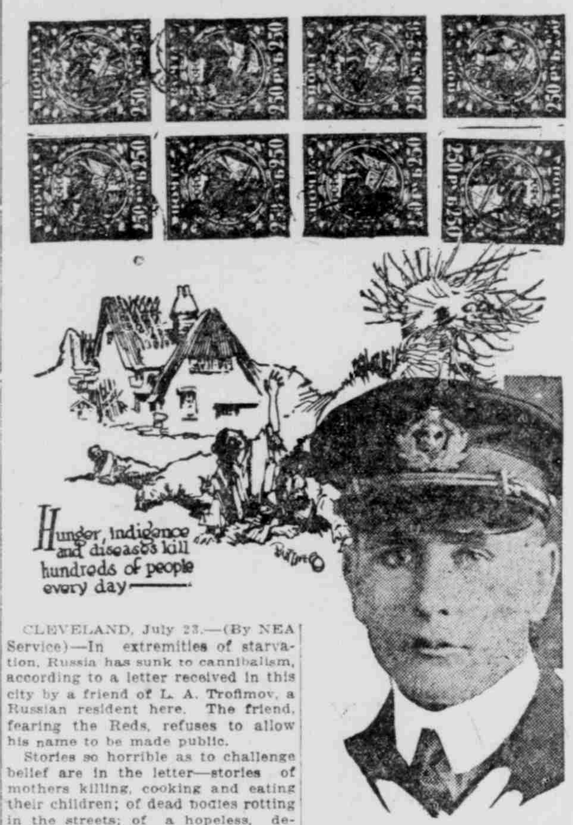
POPULATION OF BELGIUM.

BRUSSELS, July 23.—Recently-published figures show Belgium's population to be 7,462,000, of which 3,791,000 are women.

EVERETT TRUE — BY CONDO



Russians Sink to Cannibalism Says Letter Smuggled to U. S.



L. A. Trofimov in the uniform of an officer in Kerensky's navy and the 60,000 rubles in postage necessary to send a letter from Russia to Cleveland.

CLEVELAND, July 23.—(By NEA Service)—In extremities of starvation, Russia has sunk to cannibalism, according to a letter received in this city by a friend of L. A. Trofimov, a Russian resident here. The friend, fearing the Reds, refuses to allow his name to be made public.

Stories so horrible as to challenge belief are in the letter—stories of mothers killing, cooking and eating their children; of dead bodies rotting in the streets; of a hopeless, despairing nation.

The letter, smuggled past the strict mail censorship in possession of a mutual friend leaving Russia, brands life in the soviet nation as "a terrible nightmare, daily growing worse."

"Yes, the horrible pictures the letter paints are true," says Trofimov, who fled from Russia under forged passports in 1918. He had served in the Russian navy under the czar, Kerensky, and, for a short time, under Lenin, and was a submarine commander in active service during the war.

"I myself saw the beginnings which inevitably led to this. But there will be a reaction, probably resulting in the return of monarchy.

"Lenin, the one sincere man of the Bolsheviki, is conservative in his radicalism. If he dies, as the papers say is likely, men more radical will get control and the peasantry will rise against them. Then, probably a monarchy, for the people of Russia do not know of a good republic such as America. All they know is sovietism and monarchy, and between the two they will choose monarchy.

Conditions Pictured.

"What else will they do when there is no food, no hope of food and scarcely a house in Russia fit to live in? The wooden buildings are torn down for firewood, the brick buildings are tumbling down. Unrepaired roofs admit the water, which freezes between the bricks of the walls and causes them to become dislodged. People live like animals in the basements. All this because the houses have no owners and who cares if they tumble?

"Cannibalism? Yes, I believe it, for when I left Russia everyone was consuming and no one producing or planting. This would bring the terrible desperation of hunger which well might lead to cannibalism."

Text of Letter.

The letter follows:

Limperopol, March 25, 1922.

Dear Brother—

I have a chance to send you this letter by a friend of ours who goes abroad.

I wish to give briefly the picture of the life in soviet Russia.

Hunger, indigence and disease kill hundreds of people every day. The people die like flies and dead bodies lie in the streets for several days, and rot.

The most hunger is in the Volga region and Crimea. Inhabitants have eaten up all the cats, dogs, horses and have entered into cannibalism. Often mothers kill their children, cook and eat them.

There is no hope for help and this makes our life worse every day. All who have a chance flee from Russia. If you are able to do something for us I know that you will do it, because we do not know what will happen to us month to month. We would all with great pleasure leave the country of "communistic paradise" and go abroad.

I was just graduated from the high school, but I am not allowed to attend university because of my past serve with the Whites. Now I am helping my father and we both can hardly earn enough money for several pounds of black bread.

Gets Worse Daily.

Yes, the life is a terrible nightmare and is daily getting worse. All are emaciated and downcast and beeseech aid—but there is none nor any place from which to obtain it. The fields in Russia have not been sown and next year Russia will die out.

We all beg you to write a few words and advise us how to leave.

Prices of food in Russia:

One pound of black bread, 150,000 rubles (before the war a ruble was the equivalent of 49 or 50 cents in American money).

One pound of meat, 200,000 rubles.

One pound of sugar, 250,000 rubles.

One pound of butter, 1,000,000 rubles.

Thirty-six pounds of flour, 6,000,000 rubles.

One pound of potatoes, 100,000 rubles.

One man's suit, 30 to 40,000,000 rubles.

Shoes, 8 to 10,000,000 rubles.

The average daily earning is 1,000,000 rubles. How is it possible to live, is the question.

UNCLE WIGGILY

BY HOWARD R. GARIS

UNCLE WIGGILY AND BURDOCK WEED.

"Uncle Wiggily! Uncle Wiggily! Please don't be in such a hurry!" called Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy to the bunny rabbit gentleman one morning, as she saw him hopping down the front steps of his hollow stump bungalow.

"What is the matter?" asked Mr. Longears, as he turned around so Miss Fuzzy Wuzzy could see that his pink nose was twinkling straight. "Are you coming adventuring with me, Janie?"

"Thank you—no; I haven't time today," answered the muskrat lady housekeeper. "I just wanted you to wait until I could ask you to bring me home some lemons when you return. Please bring lemons."

"I will," promised Uncle Wiggily. "Are you going to make a pie?"

"No," answered Nurse Jane. "But some of my animal lady friends are coming to call this evening, and I want to give them lemonade and cake. So don't forget the lemons."

"I'll bring them," promised the bunny uncle. Then away he hopped over the fields and through the woods, saying over and over to himself, so he would not forget: "Lemons! Lemons! Lemons!

Uncle Wiggily hopped along and along, looking here and there for adventures. Perhaps it was too hot for adventures to be out that day, or it may have been that Uncle Wiggily did not look in the right places. At any rate, not an adventure did he find.

True he met a lightning bug who had been shining all night at a bull frog gentleman's party, and the lightning bug was so tired it could hardly fly home, so the bunny uncle put it in his pocket and carried it. But that was hardly an adventure.

"What I want is something exciting!" exclaimed Uncle Wiggily. He was back near his own bungalow as he said this, for it was late afternoon, and nearly time for tea. And, just as Uncle Wiggily said he'd like something exciting, there was a rustling in the weeds near the old fence.

"Oh, perhaps this is the Woozie Wolf or the Fuzzy Fox," thought the bunny. But it was only Dr. Possum, who kept the drug store.

"Hello, Dr. Possum," said Uncle Wiggily. "What are you doing in the weeds, looking for more bitter burdock roots?"

"Not this time," laughed the animal doctor. "I'm looking for sour grass, and I have found it. I want to make some sour grass tea for Billie Wagtail, the goat boy, who has been eating too many sweet things."

"I didn't know sour grass grew near my bungalow," said Uncle Wiggily.

"To be sure it does!" declared Dr. Possum. "Look, here is sheep sorrel," and he pointed to a weed with light green leaves, something like those of the clover or shamrock. "And here is horse sorrel," went on Dr. Possum, pointing to a plant with larger, and darker green leaves, shaped somewhat like the head of a spear.

"And are they both sour grasses?" asked Uncle Wiggily.

"Yes," answered Dr. Possum. "Taste them and see."

Uncle Wiggily nibbled a little of the sheep sorrel, and he made a funny and puckery face.

"Why do they call one sheep sorrel and the other horse?" asked the bunny. "Is it because sheep and horses eat the sour grasses?"

"Perhaps," answered Dr. Possum; "but I think the real reason is because the sheep sorrel leaves are small, like baby lambs, while the horse sorrel has big, strong leaves."

"I suppose so," agreed Uncle Wiggily. Then he went on to his hollow stump bungalow. Nurse Jane met him at the door and held out her paws.

"Well?" she asked.

"Yes, thank you, I am pretty well," said Uncle Wiggily, "though I didn't have a single adventure."

"Did you get the lemons?" asked the muskrat lady.

"Lemons? My goodness, no! I forgot all about them!" cried the uncle rabbit. "But I'll jump back to the store and—"

"Too late!" said Nurse Jane, sadly. "The stores are closed now. Besides, all the animal ladies are here now, and they are thirsty for lemonade! Oh, Wiggy, why did you forget?"

"I—I don't know," sadly answered the bunny. "I met Dr. Possum, and he was telling me about the sour grass—Oh, I say, Nurse Jane! Just a moment! I have an idea! All you need the lemons for is to make the lemonade sour, isn't it, so you can sweeten it?"

"That's all, Wiggy; but if you forgot the lemons I can't make any."

"I may have forgot the lemons," laughed the bunny, "but I haven't forgotten where the sour grass grows. Just a moment and you shall have your lemonade." Uncle Wiggily quickly pulled some of the strong sour horse and sheep leaves. He mashed them with the potato jammer until he had a lot of sour juice in place of lemons, and when the animal ladies drank from their glasses they all said:

"How delicious!"

"This is my lucky day!" laughed Uncle Wiggily out in the kitchen. And so it was. And if the cabbage doesn't stand on its head and tickle the feather duster with the ice pick, I'll tell you next about Uncle Wiggily and the wire fence.